



## **LINCOLN POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS**

**NUMBER:** 1190  
**TOPIC:** VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE  
**ISSUED BY:** JAMES PESCHONG, CHIEF OF POLICE  
**DATE:** 1-1-2016  
**SUPERSEDES:** G.O. 1190, 2010  
**REFERENCE:**

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### **I. POLICY**

The Lincoln Police Department seeks to uphold the rights of victims and witnesses as stated in the Nebraska Crime Victim's Bill of Rights, and is committed to victim/witness assistance programs and activities. Employees shall treat victims and witnesses with fairness, compassion, and dignity.

### **II. PROCEDURE**

#### **A. Victim/Witness Unit**

1. The Victim/Witness Unit is assigned to the Support Division, under the command of the assistant chief, and provides victim/witness services throughout Lancaster County.
2. The Victim/Witness Unit is comprised of the victim/witness administrator and staff. The unit may also utilize volunteers and interns.
3. The victim/witness administrator is responsible for the management and supervision of the unit, and all department support services for crime victims and witnesses.

B. The Victim/Witness Unit will complete an analysis of needs and available services at least every two years. The analysis shall include the following elements:

1. The extent and types of victimization within the service area;
2. An inventory of information and service needs for victims/witnesses of homicide, suicide survivors, domestic abuse, abuse and neglect of children and the elderly, and sexual assaults;
3. Victim assistance and related community services available;
4. Identification of all unfulfilled needs and the selection of those that are appropriate for the unit to meet.

#### **C. Coordination of Services**

1. The administrator will maintain liaison with other area, State and national victim/witness service providers.
2. At a minimum, liaison will be maintained with the Lancaster County Attorney's Office, Voices of Hope, Lancaster County Domestic Violence Coalition, Nebraska Crime Commission, Nebraska Coalition for Victims of Crime, National Victim Center, and the National Organization for Victims of Crime.

#### **D. Goals and Objectives of the Victim/Witness Unit**

1. Goals
  - a. To reduce the adverse impact of crime on the victims and witnesses served by the Lincoln Police Department.
  - b. To assist victims and witnesses by providing information, referrals, or volunteer advocates to direct the victim to the appropriate services.
2. Objectives
  - a. To provide emotional support.
  - b. To provide information about victim compensation.
  - c. To provide information on case status.
  - d. To facilitate return of evidence and property.
  - e. To assess other needs and make referrals.
  - f. To inform victims/survivors of their rights in accordance with the Nebraska Crime Victim's Bill of Rights.

E. The Victim/Witness Unit will provide the following assistance to all victims and witnesses, at a minimum.

1. Crisis intervention information and referral will be provided Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., by calling (402) 441-7181. Situations involving imminent danger will be handled through 911.

2. Written information notifying victims of their rights and the additional services available to all victims and witnesses on request.
- F. The investigating officer assigned to a crime is responsible for providing the following levels of assistance to victims and witnesses:
1. Secure the crime scene to protect lives and ensure safety;
  2. Provide for emergency medical care, if needed;
  3. Refer or transport victims to a safe location, and advise the victim or witness what to do if the suspect or suspect's companions or family threatens or otherwise intimidates him or her;
  4. Inform victims and witnesses about case numbers, if known, and subsequent steps in the processing of the case;
  5. Provide a telephone number that the victim or witness may call to report additional information about the status of the case;
  6. Refer victims and witnesses to appropriate agencies, i.e. counseling, medical attention, or victim advocacy, if needed.
- G. Victim/Witness Unit Responsibilities
1. The Victim/Witness Unit will recontact victims and witnesses, when appropriate, to determine whether needs are being met.
  2. The victim or witness will be referred to the appropriate officer if an explanation concerning case status is sought. If not an endangerment to the successful prosecution of the case, the officer should explain the process and status to the victim.
  3. The unit shall provide information regarding the investigation, prosecution, and victim's role in the Criminal Justice System.
  4. The unit will assist in scheduling line-ups, interviews, and similar follow-up investigation procedures at the convenience of the victim or witness.
  5. When feasible, the unit will contact victims and witnesses of major crimes if and when an arrest is made, to notify them of the arrest, charges, and custody status of the offender
  6. The Victim/Witness Unit will review reports of the following types of incidents daily, and offer services to victims and witnesses of these crimes:
    - a. Homicides, including motor vehicle homicide
    - b. Sexual assault
    - c. Robbery
    - d. Felony assault
    - e. Domestic violence
    - f. Protection order violations
    - g. Kidnapping
    - h. Child sexual and physical abuse
    - i. Burglary
    - j. False imprisonment
    - k. Crimes where the victim is over 60 years of age.
  7. The Victim/Witness Unit shall offer appropriate services to department personnel and their families following line-of-duty deaths or serious injury.